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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
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IMPROVING THE FUTURE OF AGING

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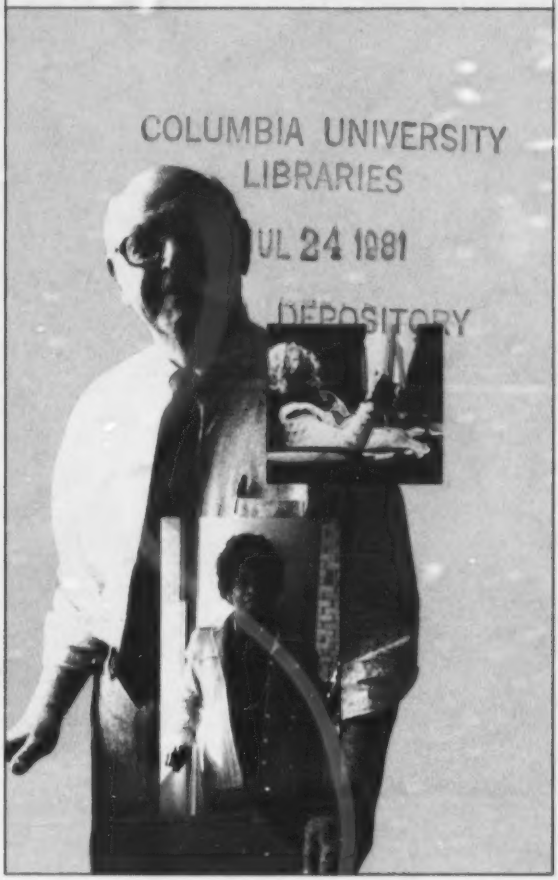

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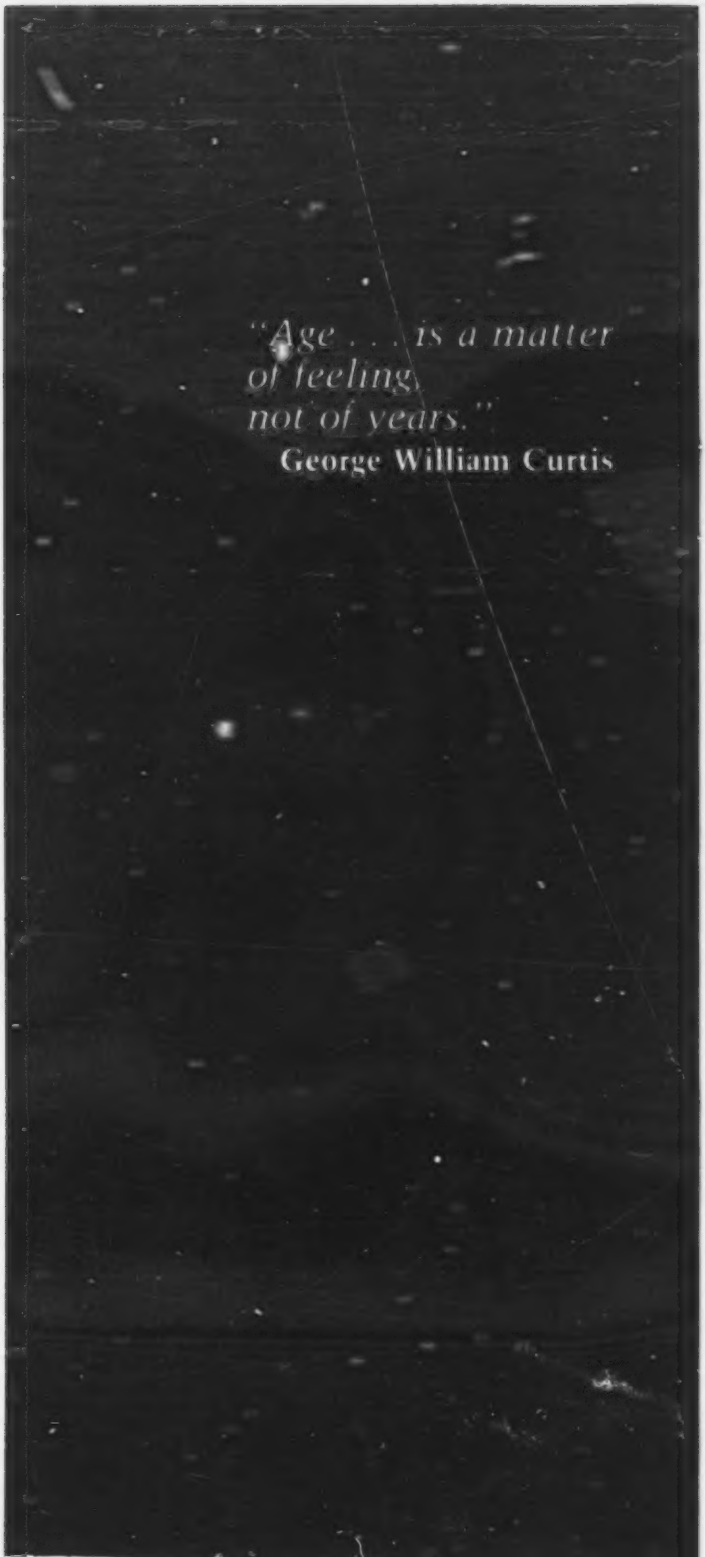
"Age . . . is a matter
of feeling,
not of years."
George William Curtis

About nine of every ten dollars the Administration on Aging (AoA) receives from Congress are spent on day-to-day operation of services to millions of older people in communities throughout the United States—services such as transportation, nutritious meals, and in-home health and homemaker services.

Every tenth dollar is spent on research, demonstration, training, education, advocacy and other efforts focused on the future. The priority goals AoA is working towards are:

- Improved quality and comprehensiveness of services to older Americans,
- A broader range of long term care services for chronically impaired older people, and
- Full integration of older people into mainstream American society.

Progress toward these goals is vitally important because America's older population is growing rapidly, much faster than the population as a whole. Each year, America's 60-years-and-over population increases by three quarters of a million persons. Today's 35 million older people are expected to number 42 million in 2000.

But many obstacles stand in the way of achieving these goals.

One major problem of older people is age discrimination which deprives many older people of opportunities they need to live full, useful lives.

Another problem is fragmentation of programs which aid older people. Many of the programs older people depend on match poorly with each other and thus fail to help as much as they should.

A growing problem facing all Americans is the expected massive increase in numbers of disabled, dependent older people who will need long term care—continuing assistance with tasks of daily living which they cannot cope with unaided.

Social Research and Demonstrations

From AoA's start in 1965, social research and demonstrations have focused on problems like these and paid rich dividends to older Americans.

READEX FICHE

" . . . out of research came help for tens of millions of people . . . "

Two of the landmark aging achievements of the early 1970's which have helped tens of millions of older Americans were shaped significantly by AoA-sponsored experiments in service delivery.

The nationwide home-delivered and congregate nutrition programs which now serve nutritious meals to more than a half million older people a day grew out of AoA model projects. These model projects tested meals programs in various types of urban and rural communities, serving older people with varying degrees of disability and wellness.

Another major development of the 1970's, the area agencies on aging, also were first tested in model project programs. The object was to see how an agency at the local level could coordinate social and health services in its area and provide sufficient community supports to permit the majority of older persons to care for themselves and be cared for in their own homes, rather than in institutions.

Some of the AoA-supported social demonstrations focus on a more limited terrain to solve knotty, seemingly intractable problems. An example is delivery of mental health services to minority elderly, such as the Hispanic elderly persons who have a double burden of aging in an alien society. A model project in Miami has developed ways of helping Hispanic elderly persons recreate meaningful lives for themselves by rediscovering meaning in their personal past lives and by reviving past skills and interests. This demonstration project proves the value of mental health services for elderly persons of all types of ethnic backgrounds, and it sets new patterns of therapy for Spanish-speaking elderly and others as well.

" . . . to change the way America deals with long term care problems . . . "

Long Term Care Initiatives

Other AoA-supported programs in research provided the basis for determining the hazard associated with the relocation of nursing home residents and other institutionalized persons. AoA subsequently distributed relocation planning guides to the States.

AoA is now intensifying its efforts to change the way America deals with long term care problems affecting almost 5 millio disabled and impaired elderly persons and their families. The scope of these efforts is fa greater than anything deployed to prepare the way for the nutrition programs and area agencies on aging in the 1970's. AoA and other agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services are working together, combining expertise and funds.

One of the major long term care initiatives is a National Channeling Demonstration Program taking place in a dozen American communities. Some of its aims are:

- To discover how to improve the coordination of health care and social services for disabled persons at the "client intake" point, the point at which the clien requests the services,
- To determine how to channel all available resources at the community level most effectively, and
- To limit unnecessary utilization of acute care nursing home facilities, and to maximize the use of in-home and other community services in a way that is economically feasible and does not replace the informal care given by family and friends.

Another major long term care initiative is AoA support of Long Term Care Gerontology Centers in universities. These centers will train medical and social service professionals and para-professionals needed to meet present and future long term care manpower needs. They also will develop new ways of delivering long term care service, and will increase the amount of quality research done in long term care. The much-needed fruits of all these efforts will be disseminated throughout the nation.

" . . . to assure the elderly a fair share of services under Federal programs . . . "

Inter-Agency Coordination

The joint approach to long term care is an example of AoA's inter-agency coordinating activity. AoA acts as advocate and spokesman for older people to assure that they get a fair share of services under Federal programs.

AoA is also using its interagency role in rural housing to help create 10 model sheltered housing facilities for rural elderly, in a joint project with the Farmers Home Administration of the Department of Agriculture.

It has worked with the Environmental Protection Agency to employ retirees as monitors of pollution standards. (Employed half-time, the participants are proving very reliable.)

In coordination with the Health Services Administration, AoA is assuring older people their just proportionate share of services from about 1,500 Public Health Service dispensaries and other health care facilities.

To encourage age integration in American society, AoA has funded the American Bar Association's Commission on Aging which is leading in the attack against age discrimination and promoting free legal services for low-income elderly persons through State and local bar associations.

AoA works with the U. S. Civil Rights Commission, the Legal Services Corporation, the American Bar Association, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Health and Human Services in a joint Task Force to study issues relating to age discrimination and to plan ways to deal with them. The task force is examining problems of abuse and neglect of the aged, studying ways to expand legal services, and promoting enforcement of the Age Discrimination Act and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act.

Ultimately, every dollar AoA invests in research, demonstration, education, advocacy and other future-focused activities and every nine dollars it spends on day-to-day operation of services to older people work towards the same goals: improved services for older people and strengthened capacity of State and area agencies on aging to serve the elderly.

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